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City of Greenville Receives “The City at Your Feet Award”

Greenville, SC ... Director of Public Works Dan Durig announced that the City of Greenville has been honored with the 2003 **City at Your Feet Award** for the City’s “exemplary efforts to improve conditions for walking in the City of Greenville” and presented the award to Greenville City Council at the City Council meeting held on Monday, September 22, 2003. The award was given by **America Walks**, a national coalition of local advocacy groups dedicated to promoting walkable communities. Director Durig said the award specifically recognized the City’s successful implementation of a pedestrian-friendly downtown, neighborhood sidewalk improvement plan and traffic management program.

Pedestrian-Friendly Downtown - For more than twenty years, Greenville’s downtown redevelopment vision has included a pedestrian oriented design, with tree-shaded sidewalks, landscaped roadways, comfortable street furniture and coordinated directional signage. The green and walkable environment has been the foundation for a nationally-recognized downtown development success story. Downtown Greenville, once a dying commercial district, has been revitalized as a office/financia/residential district which transforms into an enjoyable pedestrian destination at nights and on weekends. The next chapter in the downtown Greenville success story will build on this foundation, with the development of a significant riverfront public garden, with landscaped and lighted paved walking trails which link to other riverfront parks, as well as flower gardens and shady woodland walkways. The centerpiece of the garden will be a unique pedestrian bridge, which will replace an ugly vehicle bridge which now

covers a scenic waterfall in the middle of downtown Greenville. Construction on the garden project is expected to be complete by 2004.

Neighborhood Sidewalks - In 1997, during a series of neighborhood planning meetings, Greenville residents listed sidewalks as one of their top priorities. The City of Greenville responded with a massive increase in sidewalk rehabilitation and construction. Sidewalk plans were developed using a geographic information system, which was used to map all sidewalks and to plan improvements. A citizen committee designed a ranking system which gives priority to sidewalks near schools and recreation centers. In the last four years, almost 53,000 linear feet of sidewalk have been rehabilitated and 23,000 linear feet of new sidewalk has been installed. More than 400 individual trip hazards have also been removed. City Council plans to spend an additional \$2 million on sidewalk construction over the next three to four years. The new and rehabilitated sidewalks have been augmented by the installation of marked pedestrian crosswalks and new pedestrian signals, which are located at 63 signalized intersections, a 66% improvement as compared to three years ago. Several of the pedestrian signals include audible signals.

Neighborhood Traffic Management - "Calming" the speed and volume of neighborhood traffic has emerged as one of the most popular programs in the City of Greenville. The City began the first Neighborhood Traffic Management program in S.C. The program involves citizen volunteers and professional traffic engineers in the selection and design of traffic improvements, including speed humps, traffic circles, landscaped medians and other devices. The improvements have contributed to slower vehicle speeds and increased livability in City neighborhoods. The Greenville Police Department has coordinated with other City personnel in neighborhood traffic management, from the enforcement perspective. For example, almost 2,600 tickets were written for red light violations in 2002.

City Council Member and Public Works Committee Chair Diane Smock commended City staff for their efforts in creating a walkable city and acknowledged the significance

of the “City at Your Feet” award. She said, “This award means a great deal because it recognizes the importance of creating and maintaining a pedestrian-friendly environment; a place where people choose to live and work because there are sidewalks and safe neighborhood streets. The City’s investment in new and rehabilitated sidewalks and traffic calming has added to our quality of life and been an important element in the successful revitalization of our downtown and our neighborhoods.”

America Walks is a membership organization whose members are autonomous grassroots organizations from across the country, each working to improve conditions for walking in their area. The mission of America Walks is to foster the development of community-based pedestrian advocacy groups, to educate the public about the benefits of walking, and, when appropriate, to act as a collective voice for walking advocates. America Walks and its member organizations envision an America where every city street has sidewalks, where drivers always respect pedestrians, and where a ten-year-old can safely walk to buy a loaf of bread.

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